

Gender and Reproductive Health Policy: Experiences from the Field

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The views expressed in this paper, however, do not necessarily reflect those of USAID.

Executive Summary

Background

While recognition of the importance of gender issues to reproductive health (RH) programs has grown significantly in the past several years, major challenges in implementing gender-sensitive programs remain. Differences in definitions and perspectives of gender in the context of RH, scarcity of evidence of the effectiveness of gender-sensitive approaches, and inadequate methodological tools are among the constraints to “operationalizing” gender.

This study was undertaken by the POLICY Project in order to examine what it means operationally to integrate gender into an RH policy project. The POLICY Project is a 5-year, \$70 million project of USAID’s Center for Population, Health and Nutrition (PHN). Its purpose is to create a supportive environment for family planning (FP)/RH programs, including HIV/AIDS. Three specific components of the policy environment are emphasized: (1) political and popular support strengthened; (2) national and subnational policies, guidelines, and plans developed in support of FP/RH; and (3) financial and other resources mobilized for FP/RH needs. The project has worked in nearly 40 countries throughout Africa, Asia, Central Europe, and Latin America with both public and private sector institutions to strengthen their capabilities to contribute to the development and implementation of effective policies and programs. Project staff collaborate with national and local governments; nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), such as FP associations, women’s groups, grassroots organizations, and professional associations; commercial organizations; and research institutions.

Gender is treated as a crosscutting issue by the project, an element that permeates all of the project’s work. A Gender Working Group (GWG) promotes the importance of gender in achieving project goals and providing action-oriented strategies for incorporating gender into POLICY activities. The GWG sponsors a series of speakers and discussions that demonstrate gender analysis applications and policy implications, distributes materials on gender issues to staff, and maintains a library of gender resource materials. GWG members also provide technical assistance to other POLICY staff and country counterparts in addressing gender-related opportunities and constraints to the achievement of project results. GWG members also serve on USAID’s Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG), which works to integrate gender into USAID’s population and health programs.

Special Gender Study

The GWG undertook this study as the project approached its final year of implementation, to capture the ways and extent to which gender issues have been addressed in country programs. Objectives of the study were to identify how the project has operationalized gender; identify results achieved; recommend ways to strengthen gender sensitive approaches; and share lessons learned and better practices with partners and collaborators. The following five research questions guided the study:

1. How is gender defined within the context of POLICY country programs? What gender issues have been identified?
2. What are country programs doing to address these gender issues?
3. What has been the effect of these gender-related activities on achieving POLICY results?
4. Do certain programmatic factors influence decisions and efforts to address gender issues?
5. How can we support and strengthen gender-sensitive approaches in the future?

Qualitative research methods were used to collect and analyze data to address these five research questions. Five members of the POLICY GWG conducted one-on-one, in-depth interviews in 1999 with managers from all 33 active POLICY country programs. The primary objective was to describe how country programs are interpreting and addressing gender and what outcome or impact this is having. At the same time, the interview session was used as an opportunity to encourage program managers to think about and articulate the gender issues and implications in their programs in order to improve gender-sensitive approaches in the future. Thus, the research was formative as well as summative. In addition, an analysis of the use of terms “gender,” “women,” and “men/males” in POLICY country workplans was carried out to assess the link between formal project documents and accounts of gender-related activities in POLICY country programs.

Results

Respondents offered a variety of definitions of gender, most of which included multiple dimensions. The most commonly reported dimensions referred to gender as socially defined roles and identified various inequalities between women and men. The low status of women and their poor representation in leadership roles were the most frequently reported gender issues in POLICY country programs. In particular, women’s status was cited as a gender issue by two-thirds of the respondents. Many other issues, which often were interrelated, were also identified. They included power imbalances between women and men at the family or personal level, cultural practices that affect RH, lack of male involvement in RH, constraints on access to RH services, disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on women, lack of reproductive rights, and lack of communication about RH with couples. Only two respondents indicated that they were not addressing gender issues in their country program.

Of the 33 country programs included in this study, 30 (91 percent) address or had addressed gender with specific activities at some point during the life of the project. The most frequently reported activities (noted by 20 percent or more respondents) include gender topics in analyses, presentations, documents, and dialogue on policy and planning issues; women and women’s NGOs as counterparts and participants, or correct gender imbalances in participation; train and provide subcontracts and grants to strengthen participation of women’s organizations; develop gender-sensitive policies, guidelines and plans; and, conduct research on gender issues in the policy process and service delivery.

The majority (70 percent) of country programs that undertook gender-related activities reported that the gender activities had an effect on POLICY results. The other 27 percent reported that activities either had no effect or that “it’s too early to tell.” Reported

results include gender-related issues incorporated into policies and plans; strengthened women's NGOs and female leadership; increased policy partners' understanding of gender roles or changed attitudes/values about gender; facilitated dialogue on RH issues and increased political support; broadened participation in the policy process (not necessarily women's participation); increased attention to women's education; strengthened research capacity on women's issues; and contributions to contraceptive self-reliance.

In an attempt to identify factors associated with gender-sensitive approaches, country programs were classified according to their relative comprehensiveness in addressing gender. Comprehensiveness was defined by the number of different types of gender-related activities, the extent to which these activities featured in the overall country program, and outcomes of these activities. Based on these criteria, seven country programs (Bolivia, Guatemala, India, Jordan Kenya, Peru and Turkey) are implementing four or more types of gender-related activities, and they reported that these activities are having an impact on achievement of their program results. Based on profile comparisons among the country programs with four or more gender-related activities and those with less than four, the following program components appeared to strengthen the various gender strategies and their results:

- An explicit approach to gender (e.g., specifying gender issues in the workplan, including gender-related objectives in the results framework, and identifying gender-specific evaluation criteria).
- Consensus on the importance of gender among project staff, the Mission, and counterparts.
- Sufficient technical and financial resources to incorporate gender.

Results of the study demonstrate the importance of gender issues and approaches to POLICY country programs specifically, and to the FP/RH policy environment more broadly. POLICY country managers clearly recognize the importance of gender to the success of their programs. For many, awareness of and attention to gender issues grew during the life of the project. Several noted that its importance would continue to increase.

Some country managers said that their programs have explicitly incorporated gender, while others have addressed gender in an ad hoc or implicit manner. Countries have addressed an array of gender issues. The various issues and approaches taken are based on the country context; POLICY, Mission, and counterpart objectives; and project resources. Although approaches and number of activities undertaken varied from one country program to another, all gender-related activities fully supported the larger POLICY Project objectives.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and recommendations voiced by respondents, the following actions are recommended for future FP/RH policy projects:

- ***Cultivate a positive enabling environment for addressing gender.*** Discuss its importance with partners (counterparts, USAID Missions, other partners).

- ***Make gender an explicit priority.*** Identify the issues in the design of a country program, define objectives and plan interventions to respond to the gender issues, and develop gender-sensitive indicators; earmark sufficient technical and financial resources for incorporating gender.
- ***Take a participatory approach to designing and incorporating gender.*** In particular, include experts on local culture, society, and gender issues.
- ***Encourage and support a diversity of approaches.*** While a single gender-focused activity can produce a positive result, a more comprehensive approach that integrates gender across all country program activities promotes synergies among the activities.
- ***Provide technical training in gender to project staff.*** Provide opportunities for ongoing information sharing and dialogue.
- ***Develop and refine methods for documenting and measuring the impact of gender-sensitive approaches.***

Gender and Reproductive Health Policy: Experiences from the Field

1. Background

Gender and Reproductive Health Programs

Recognition of the role of gender in reproductive health (RH) programs has grown significantly in the past several years. In particular, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) in Beijing brought gender issues to the forefront, emphasizing the links between women's status, health goals, and development and calling for greater attention to the role of gender in design and implementation of population and health programs. Countries worldwide, assisted by bilateral and international donors and in partnership with women's groups, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other civil society organizations, are now developing and implementing programs of action to address gender in the context of RH.

While much progress has been made in the raising awareness of the importance of gender in achieving RH and broader development goals, major challenges in implementing gender-sensitive programs remain. First, the concept of gender within the context of RH is not well defined. Differences in definitions and perspectives often create confusion over what constitutes a gender-sensitive RH program. For example, while some advocate for interventions that aim to increase women's status in society overall, others focus on gender as a quality-of-care issue for women. Still others emphasize the role of men in RH. Clearly, all of these perspectives are important and not necessarily mutually exclusive; however, there is little consensus on their relative priorities (USAID, 1999). A paucity of evidence of the effectiveness of these gender-sensitive perspectives contributes to this lack of consensus. While new methods for measuring the impact of gender-sensitive approaches are emerging (e.g., improved qualitative research methodologies, gender-sensitive evaluation indicators, etc.), few have been widely tested and applied (Women's Study Project, N.d.; Yinger et al., 1999; Pfannenschmidt, 1997; SIDA, 1997; Status of Women in Canada, 1996).

Given these constraints, operationalizing gender within an RH program or project is not straightforward. It requires a common vision of the role of gender in RH, a thorough understanding of how gender issues affect the project's mandate, development or reorientation of interventions to respond to these issues, and project management that facilitates this process. This study was undertaken by the POLICY Project to examine what it means operationally to integrate gender into an RH project—specifically, a project that focuses on the policy environment for family planning (FP)/RH programs.

POLICY Project

The POLICY Project is a 5-year, \$70 million project of USAID's Center for Population, Health and Nutrition (PHN). Its purpose is to create a supportive environment for

FP/RH programs, including HIV/AIDS, through the promotion of a participatory policy process and population policies that respond to client needs. Managed by the Futures Group International (TFGI), in collaboration with the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) and the Center for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), the project has worked in nearly 40 countries throughout Africa, Asia, Central Europe, and Latin America, and was active in 33 at the time of this study.

The project works with both public and private sector institutions to strengthen their capabilities to contribute to the development and implementation of effective policies and programs. Project staff collaborate with national and local governments; NGOs, such as FP associations, women's groups, grassroots organizations, and professional associations; commercial organizations; and research institutions in achieving its goals.

Project goals are enumerated in a framework of results that includes a higher order strategic objective (SO) and intermediate results (IRs).¹ POLICY's SO is *Improved policy environment for family planning and reproductive health programs, including HIV/AIDS*. Three specific components of the policy environment (and corresponding objectives) are emphasized: (1) *political and popular support strengthened*; (2) *national and subnational policies, guidelines, and plans developed in support of FP/RH*; and (3) *financial and other resources mobilized for FP/RH needs*. POLICY's SO is supported by the following five IRs:

- IR1: *Effective advocacy for FP/RH*
- IR2: *Strengthened collaboration among governmental and nongovernmental sectors*
- IR3: *More effective planning for FP/RH*
- IR4: *Improved financing for FP/RH*
- IR5: *Information used for policy and program development*

POLICY's Gender Working Group

Gender is treated as a crosscutting issue by the project, and as such, is intended to permeate all of the project's work. At the start of the project in 1995, a Gender Working Group (GWG) was formed to promote the importance of gender to achieving project goals and providing action-oriented strategies for incorporating gender into POLICY activities. The GWG educates staff about what gender means for the project's country and sectoral work by sponsoring a series of speakers and discussions that demonstrate gender analysis applications and policy implications, distributing materials on gender issues to staff, and maintaining a library of gender resource materials. GWG members also provide technical assistance to other POLICY staff and country counterparts in addressing gender-related opportunities and constraints to the achievement of project results. The GWG disseminates new gender approaches, including those developed by USAID/PHN's Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG), to POLICY staff.

¹ USAID uses the method of results frameworks throughout its agency programs and projects to define objectives and measure their achievement.

Interagency Gender Working Group

The IGWG comprises representatives from USAID/PHN, USAID-funded cooperating agencies (CAs), and others who focus on integrating gender issues into PHN activities. The mission of the IGWG is to promote gender equity within population and health programs in the context of sustainable development and human rights. The group is divided into four subcommittees: Gender and Policy, Research and Indicators, Male Involvement in Reproductive Health, and Program Strategies and Implementation. Since 1997, POLICY staff have served on IGWG subcommittees as well as its steering committee.

In 1998, the Gender and Policy subcommittee conducted a study with PHN staff from USAID and its implementing agencies to identify areas in which gender is particularly relevant to PHN policies and programs. The purpose of the study was to define in practical terms how gender can be better incorporated into PHN activities. The results, which highlighted definitions of gender, operational issues within PHN programs, the impact of programs and recommendations for strengthening programmatic responses, were summarized in the presentation “Emerging Voices on Gender” (Voices). USAID and its partners are using this presentation to foster dialogue about gender in FP/RH programs and encourage gender-sensitive approaches. Results from the Voices study were used to design this study.

POLICY Project Special Gender Study

As the POLICY Project approached its final year of implementation, it sought to capture the ways and extent to which gender issues have been addressed in POLICY country programs. The POLICY GWG also wanted to learn more about the role of gender in FP/RH policy programs in particular to inform the design of future FP/RH policy work in the developing world. Therefore, the GWG initiated a special study whose objectives are to

- Identify how the project operationalized gender in country programs;
- Identify results achieved;
- Recommend ways to strengthen gender sensitive approaches; and,
- Share lessons learned and better practices with partners and collaborators.

Five research questions guided the study:

1. How is gender defined within the context of POLICY country programs? What gender issues have been identified?
2. What are country programs doing to address these gender issues?
3. What has been the outcomes of gender-related activities?
4. Do certain programmatic factors influence decisions and efforts to address gender issues?
5. How can we support and strengthen gender-sensitive approaches in the future?

II. Methodology

We used qualitative research methods to collect and analyze data to address the five research questions. Five members of the POLICY GWG conducted one-on-one, in-depth interviews with program managers from all 33 active POLICY country programs.²

| POLICY Country Programs | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Regions | Countries | |
| Africa | Benin Ethio pia Ghana Haiti Kenya Madagascar* Malawi Mali* Morocco | Mozambique Nigeria* REDSO/ESA REDSO/WSA CERPOD Senegal South Africa Tanzania Zambia Zimbabwe |
| Asia/Near East | Bangladesh Egypt India Indonesia | Jordan Nepal Philippines |
| Europe/Eurasia | Kazakhstan Krygyztan* Romania Russia | Turkey Turkmenistan* Ukraine Uzbekistan* |
| Latin America | Bolivia Brazil* Dominican Republic* Guatemala | Jamaica Mexico Paraguay* Peru |

**Countries with a star indicate countries not included in this study. These countries were not active at the time that we began the study and were not added during the interview process.*

Twenty-three women and 13 men were interviewed. Interviews occurred from May through October 1999. All but two interviews were conducted face-to-face.³ Interviewers

² POLICY refers to its program managers as country managers. These are a combination of U.S.-based technical staff and local technical advisors who are responsible for program development, reporting, administration, and liaison with USAID Missions and the project's global management team. These staff also coordinate the efforts of all local and international staff who work on the program in said country. We conducted two additional interviews with Bolivia and Jordan team members at the recommendation of their country managers. In the cases of Guatemala, Kenya, Peru, and Ukraine, one or more other key technical or field staff were present during the interview with the country manager and contributed to the interview. However, our unit of analysis in all cases was the country program.

³ One interview was conducted by telephone and one country program provided written answers to the interview questions.

followed a pretested interview protocol using a semistructured interview guide (see Appendix A). With few exceptions, most respondents had previously attended a presentation of the IGWG Voices study. Interviewers used key findings and concepts from this study to elaborate some of the interview questions and prompt respondents' assessment of their programs. For the most part, all respondents were asked the same questions, but some topics were explored in greater depth with some respondents. For example, the nature and size of a country program, the respondent's familiarity with gender issues, and the extent to which gender was incorporated into the program influenced the emphasis of different interview questions and the amount of time the interviewer spent exploring a particular topic. Interview's averaged about one hour in length.

The interview also was used as an opportunity to offer ideas on ways to incorporate gender, share information on resources for strengthening gender approaches, and advocate for more attention to gender. Thus, the research was formative as well as summative (Patton, 1990).

Notes from individual country program interviews were coded by interview question. A separate analysis file containing country-tagged responses was then constructed for each interview question. Data analysts (three of the interviewers) used content analysis to construct response categories and, as appropriate, tabulated or cross-tabulated frequencies of responses to address the research questions.

Additional information on country programs from POLICY workplans and administrative reports was obtained, and an analysis of the use of terms "gender," "women," and "men/male" in the country workplans was conducted to assess the link between formal project documents and the interview accounts of gender-related activities in POLICY country programs.

III. Research Results

Presentation of the results are organized around the following five research questions.

***Question 1. How is gender defined within the context of POLICY country programs?
What are the gender issues?***

Respondents offered a variety of definitions of gender, most of which included multiple dimensions. Table 1 presents the dimensions that were reported and the frequency of responses.⁴ The most commonly reported dimensions refer to gender as socially defined roles and identify various inequalities between women and men.

⁴ Not surprisingly, many of these definitions are similar to those reported in the IGWG Voices study. Interviewers sometimes reviewed the range of definitions of gender from Voices during the interview. However, many respondents responded to the question without prompting.

Table 1
Definitions of Gender

| Dimension | Number of respondents who reported this dimension |
|---|--|
| Inequality or differences between men and women with regard to participation in development, access to resources, and power | 15 |
| Socially and culturally defined roles based on sex | 14 |
| Differential impacts on women and men | 7 |
| Empowerment of women; giving women a voice | 7 |
| Male involvement in RH | 4 |
| Changing gender norms/social inequities | 2 |
| Equal representation of men's and women's issues and needs in the RH policy process/dialogue | 2 |
| Human rights | 2 |
| Empowerment of women and men | 1 |
| Understanding cultural roles and behaviors | 1 |

Note: More than one response per interview is possible

The low status of women and their poor representation in leadership roles were the most frequently reported gender issues in POLICY country programs. In particular, two-thirds of the respondents cited women's status as a gender issue related to their program. Many other issues, which often were interrelated, also were identified, as shown in Table 2. Only two respondents indicated that there were no gender issues of relevance to their country programs.⁵

⁵ This does not imply that no gender issues exist in the country, but simply reflects the country manager's perspective on whether gender issues were relevant to POLICY's program in that particular country.

Table 2
Gender Issues in Country Programs

| Gender issue | Number of country programs that reported this issue |
|--|--|
| Low status of women; women's lack of voice | 22 |
| Poor representation of women in policymaking and program management | 15 |
| Imbalance of power between women and men at the family or personal level | 10 |
| Cultural practices that affect women's RH ⁶ | 9 |
| Lack of male involvement in RH | 8 |
| Constraints to women's access/mobility to RH services | 6 |
| Disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on women | 5 |
| Lack of reproductive rights | 4 |
| Lack of communication about RH with couples | 2 |
| No gender issues | 2 |

Note: More than one response per country is possible

Question 2. What are country programs doing to address these gender issues?

Of the 33 country programs included in this study, 30 are addressing or had addressed gender with specific activities at some point over the life of the project. Types of activities and their frequencies of occurrence in country programs are shown in Table 3. All of these activities support POLICY's overall project objectives and reflect the mandate of the project to treat gender as a crosscutting issue.

⁶ These included female genital cutting (FGC), men having sex with men (MSM), promiscuity, taboos on RH, and "sugar daddies."

Table 3
Gender-related Activities in POLICY Country Programs

| Activity | Number of country programs that undertook this activity |
|--|--|
| Include gender topics in analyses, presentation, documents, and dialogue on policy and planning issues | 18 |
| Include women and women's NGOs as counterparts and participants in POLICY activities; correct gender imbalances in participation | 17 |
| Train and provide subcontracts and grants to strengthen participation of women's organizations | 9 |
| Develop gender-sensitive policies, guidelines, and plans | 8 |
| Conduct research on gender issues in the policy process and service delivery | 7 |
| Support attention to unmet need, improved method mix, dual protection, and other RH services/approaches that meet women's health needs | 5 |
| Conduct orientation workshops on gender and/or gender and RH issues | 4 |
| Share/distribute information about gender | 4 |
| Support the ICPD agenda and its implementation | 4 |
| Diversify stakeholder participation | 3 |
| Design curriculum for gender-training programs | 2 |
| Provide technical assistance in gender to USAID Missions | 2 |
| Conduct a gender assessment | 1 |
| Number of countries that reported at least one gender activity | 30 out of 33 |

Note: More than one response per country program is possible

More than one-half (18) of POLICY country programs reported that they *include gender topics in analyses, presentations, documents, and dialogue on policy and planning issues*. Activities under this category ranged from POLICY support for analysis of gender issues, which participants or counterparts identified as important for publication. In Turkey, POLICY supported publication of a booklet on women's issues and the international accords from Cairo and Beijing. The booklet was used as a tool in regional workshops to identify actions at the regional/community level. In Kazakhstan, SPECTRUM, the POLICY demographic projection and impacts suite of computer models, was used to dispel the idea that the country was facing a demographic crisis. POLICY's work helped convince the Kazakhstan government that the best way to meet population goals was to meet the needs of women by improving FP/RH services, not by making abortion illegal and paying women to

have children, as the government originally proposed. In Ethiopia, Kenya, and Zambia, the AIDS Impact Model (AIM), a computer model that projects the impact of AIDS in a country, and briefing materials on the HIV/AIDS epidemic, explicitly addressed gender issues.

Almost as many country programs (17) reported that they *include women and women's NGOs as counterparts and participants in POLICY activities* in an effort to *correct gender imbalances in participation* and better represent women's perspectives in the policy process. Several country program managers reported hiring women who had experience working on gender issues as project employees. Many managers reported reaching out to women leaders, while others reported striving for gender balances or the inclusion of women presenters at workshops. In Ukraine, POLICY tried to get more men involved in FP/RH policy and decision making in order that these issues will not be considered just a "woman's problem."

More than one-quarter of POLICY country programs reported that they *provide training, subcontracts, or grants to strengthen participation of women's organizations*. In Jordan, POLICY is working with and supporting the Jordanian National Commission for Women to open a broad-based national dialogue on the National Women's Strategy (NWS). The goal is to develop an implementation plan for the strategy. In the Philippines, POLICY workshops led to the permanent establishment of a 5-percent allocation of the FP/RH budget to address gender issues. POLICY also provided technical and financial support to workshops aimed at developing national guidelines for the use of the allocated funds. In addition, POLICY played a role in positioning the National Council on the Role of Filipino Women, a council that holds a seat in the president's cabinet, to oversee the use of the gender budget within the FP/RH program.

Nearly one-quarter of POLICY country programs helped to *develop gender-sensitive policies, guidelines, and plans*. For example, in Guatemala POLICY is working with the Organization of Guatemalan Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Association of Women Physicians to address gender and quality of care issues in their research, conferences, and training programs. At the state level in India, POLICY helped to influence policy developers to include statements, policies, and programs that address equality for women in access to services and types of treatment, such as STD services and domestic violence.

More than 20 percent of country programs *conduct research on gender issues in the policy process and service delivery*. In Bolivia, POLICY supported research on gender-based barriers to RH services. In Guatemala, POLICY supported research on medical barriers to access of RH services by conducting a survey that asks both clients and providers if spousal approval should be obtained for FP services. Results of this survey are being used to train service providers and raise awareness about the relationships that affect women's ability to plan their "RH lives and use contraceptives." In India, POLICY supported 12 research studies that are being used to reform operational policies in India's FP program. The studies, which include gender issues, address personnel issues and hours of clinic operation, identifying problems with provider-client interactions that limit access for women. In Nepal, POLICY is supporting a film designed to raise awareness about the problem of girl trafficking in the country.

Fifteen percent of POLICY country programs reported that they *indirectly address gender by attending to issues such as unmet need, improved method mix, dual protection, and other RH services and approaches that meet women's health needs*. For example, in Kenya an analysis of FP program options specifically highlighted method mix and dual protection. In Morocco, POLICY helped to promote dialogue in planning meetings about FP methods that are suitable for unmarried, as well as married women.

Twelve percent of POLICY country programs (4) reported that they *conduct orientation workshops on gender and/or gender and RH issues*. In Jordan, POLICY facilitated women's integration into politics with the assumption that improving the status of women in politics will, in the long run, improve RH in the country. As part of Jordan's Status of Women Project, POLICY conducted sensitization workshops during the last election to encourage women to participate in the election. Another four country programs report they *share and distribute information on gender*. For example, gender was not specifically highlighted at advocacy workshops in Benin; however, organizers distributed documents on gender that were developed by other organizations. Yet another four country programs report explicit *support of the ICPD agenda and its implementation*.

Other types of reported activities include *diversify stakeholder participation, design gender-training curricula, provide technical assistance in gender to USAID Missions, and conduct gender assessments*. For example, under the Regional Initiative on Postabortion Care (PAC) for East and Southern Africa, POLICY has advocated for broadening the current medical approach to PAC to include community perspectives, which bring to bear neglected gender issues. In Mexico, POLICY has supported AIDS advocacy that emphasizes diversity in stakeholder participation, broadening the process to include groups other than those that represent exclusively homosexual men. In Guatemala, POLICY is working with a degree program (Diploma Instancia) designed by the Ministry of Health (MOH), Social Security Institute, University of Guatemala Medical College, Association of Women Physicians, USAID/UNFPA, and the World Health Organization (WHO) to design modules on women's status, gender, and human sexuality. The Kenya country program conducted a gender assessment that was used to design POLICY activities.

No regional differences were observed in the types of gender-related activities that POLICY country programs undertook.

Question 3. What has been the effect of these gender-related activities on achieving POLICY results?

Twenty-six respondents from the 30 country programs that reported at least one gender-related activity responded to the question of whether their activities have had an effect on POLICY country results.⁷ Among these 26 country programs, 19 (73%) reported

⁷ Four respondents reported early on in their interviews that they are not addressing gender in their country programs, but then later described gender-related program activities. These respondents were not asked the question about effect.

that gender activities had an effect on POLICY results or gender norms. In four of these programs (Bolivia, Peru, PAC Initiative, and REDSO/WSA) gender was considered critical to, or greatly facilitated, achievement of POLICY results. Seven respondents (27%) reported that activities either had no effect or that “it’s too early to tell.” The reported results are summarized in Table 4

Table 4
Results of Gender-related Activities

| Reported result | Number of countries | Country programs that reported this result |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| Gender-related issues incorporated into policies and plans | 9 | Bolivia, Haiti, India, Jordan, Morocco, Philippines, Peru, Ukraine, Zambia |
| Strengthened women’s NGOs and female leadership | 9 | Bolivia, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Peru, Philippines, Russia |
| Increased policy partners’ understanding of gender roles/changed attitudes or values about gender | 6 | Benin, Bolivia, Kenya, Peru, PAC Initiative, REDSO/WSA |
| Facilitated dialogue on, increased political support for, RH issues | 4 | Bolivia, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Mexico |
| Broadened participation in the policy process (not necessarily women’s) | 2 | Peru, Turkey |
| Other (i.e., increased attention to women’s education, strengthened research capacity on women’s issues, contributed to contraceptive self-reliance) | 3 | CERPOD, Jordan, Turkey |

Nine countries reported that *gender-related issues have been incorporated into policies and plans*. For example, in Haiti, POLICY helped to draft a document titled *Call to Action*. As the country manager reported, the document “has enjoyed a very high profile with the support of then-Under Secretary of State Timothy Wirth and First Lady Hillary Clinton, and an increasing number of groups are throwing their support behind the document. The gender nature of *Call to Action* has increased the responsiveness of people because it incorporates the perspectives of women. Gender is directly addressed, and women’s issues are inserted as a goal into the national program.” The Philippines’ country manager reported, “POLICY and POPCOM worked in a very challenging environment [to shift] the policy focus to meeting the unmet needs of women and couples. We really wanted to address the unmet needs of women, but we had to couch it as ‘women and couples’ in order for the new strategy to be acceptable to the government of the Philippines. One way to overcome this

gap between men and women in regard to desired family size is to involve men in FP/RH, and male involvement was added to POPCOM's directives.”

Nine countries also reported that their efforts to address gender have *strengthened women's NGOs and female leadership*. In Russia, POLICY helped create a network of women's NGOs, which is in the process of addressing how to implement an advocacy campaign. A series of minigrants awarded to the NGO network, through the work of POLICY, made it possible for a national conference of NGOs to meet and discuss women's issues in RH. The successful conference provided a way for NGO representatives to make contacts to strengthen their ability to work on the issues that concern them. Another example comes from Bolivia's Riberalta region. POLICY supported advocacy workshops on gender and RH to improve women's capability to become involved in the planning process. The goal was to get women to take on a more active role in the decisions regarding their communities and lives. POLICY workshops sparked participants to form the *Casa de la Mujer*, now a registered NGO that seeks to empower women through advocacy and counseling and raise awareness among women of RH issues. Also in Riberalta, several women (some of whom are on the board of *Casa de la Mujer*) serve on the municipality's citizen committee that monitors the implementation of the municipality's Annual Development Plan, which includes (due primarily to POLICY's focus on RH and gender during participatory planning workshop) programs targeting RH and gender issues. POLICY is providing a consultant to the citizen's committee to help design a monitoring and evaluation plan to track implementation of the development programs.

Six countries reported that they were able to *increase policy partners' understanding of gender roles and/or changed attitudes or values about gender*. In Bolivia, “POLICY has contributed to changing gender attitudes at both the institutional and individual levels. We have had testimonials from many women who have told of the impact of our workshops on changing their lives. At the institutional level, there is a change in the environment and attitudes toward sexual and RH and gender—a positive impact that has raised awareness about gender sensitivity. POLICY helped the groups work through the changes and crises affiliated with that kind of personal exploration [i.e., the gender and sexual and RH workshops stirred up so much discussion and introduced new ways of thinking, people were genuinely affected by it and needed help resolving the ‘crises’ that sometimes come with big value changes].”

Another illustrative example comes from the PAC Initiative: “By broadening the PAC framework to include sociocultural (and thus gender) concerns, we are redefining how the public health community addresses PAC. In Zimbabwe, we have demonstrated that the community is concerned about unsafe abortion and that there are some big barriers in access to services (including gender barriers) that will have to be addressed if PAC is to have a major health impact. Taking this approach has helped us achieve our POLICY and PAC Initiative goals, because this broader framework has resonated with many of our stakeholders and partners. It is a new way of thinking that has filled the gap. Other collaborating agencies and USAID incorporated these ideas into their service delivery strategies and design of new projects.”

Four countries reported that gender activities resulted in *facilitating dialogue on, and increased political support for, RH issues*. In Mexico, where HIV/AIDS was defined as a gay issue, POLICY activities broadened the issue as a public health problem by including heterosexual women and men. Politicians, who tend to be conservative Catholics, gave no support in the past; however, by mainstreaming the issue, the AIDS program received considerable financial and political support. In Guatemala, POLICY has been instrumental in changing political support for women's RH. Before the POLICY work, women did not participate in RH policy. Ironically, gender was a much more acceptable theme than RH for many groups, including the government. Approaching RH from a gender perspective has opened many doors that may have otherwise been shut.

Question 4. Do certain programmatic factors influence decisions and efforts to address gender issues?

In an attempt to identify factors associated with gender-sensitive approaches, country programs were classified according to their relative comprehensiveness in addressing gender. Comprehensiveness was defined by the number of different types of gender-related activities, the extent to which these activities featured in the overall country program, and the outcomes of these activities. Based on these criteria, seven country programs (Bolivia, Guatemala, India, Jordan Kenya, Peru, and Turkey) are implementing four or more types of gender-related activities; they reported that these activities are having an impact on achievement of their program results (see Table 5 below).⁸

⁸ REDSO/WSA and the PAC Initiative were not considered in this analysis because their activities cover more than one country.

Table 5
Gender Activities in Seven Countries with Four or More Types of Activities

| Activities | Bolivia | Guatemala | India | Jordan | Kenya | Peru | Turkey |
|---|----------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| Include gender topics in analyses, presentation, documents, and dialogue on policy and planning issues | | x | | | x | x | x |
| Include women and women's NGOs as counterparts and participants in POLICY activities; correct gender imbalances in participation | | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Train and provide sub-contracts and grants to strengthen participation of women's organizations | x | x | | x | | x | |
| Develop gender-sensitive policies, guidelines, and plans | x | x | x | x | | | x |
| Conduct research on gender issues in the policy process and service delivery | x | x | x | x | x | | |
| Support attention to unmet need, improved method mix, dual protection, and other RH services/ approaches that meet women's health needs | | | x | | x | | |
| Conduct orientation workshops on gender and/or gender and RH issues | x | | | x | | | |
| Share/distribute information about gender | | | | | | | |
| Support the ICPD agenda and its implementation | | x | | | | | x |
| Diversify stakeholder participation | | | | | | | |
| Design curriculum for gender training programs | | x | | | | x | |
| Provide technical assistance in gender to USAID Missions | | x | | | | | |
| Conduct a gender assessment | | | | | x | | |

Although this classification is used below to examine relationships between programmatic factors and gender approaches, comprehensiveness is only one way to measure a “successful” gender approach. Several countries, such as the Philippines and Mexico, undertook fewer types of gender-related activities, but observed notable results. These cases are also discussed below.

Program and Gender Objectives

Six country programs (Bolivia, Guatemala, Jordan, Kenya, Peru, and Mexico) reported that gender is being addressed in an explicit manner. The first five of these countries are classified as having carried out four or more gender-related activities, suggesting that treating gender as an explicit program component helps address gender more comprehensively. However, making gender explicit does not appear to be a prerequisite to undertaking gender-related activities, since the majority of country programs (including India and Turkey) had no explicit gender component but still undertook gender-related activities.

In most country programs, including those with four or more gender activities, gender was not mentioned directly in either the POLICY program results framework (i.e., program SO and IRs) or the Mission results framework. Exceptions are Bolivia, Jordan, and Peru, where gender or gender issues are mentioned in the POLICY results framework. Other exceptions are Benin, Haiti, and Nepal, where gender is mentioned in the Mission results framework for population and health. Again, explicit gender-related objectives support a more comprehensive approach but do not appear to be a prerequisite for either a comprehensive approach or for addressing gender in general.

Although gender or gender issues rarely appeared in program objectives, they were frequently mentioned in other country program and POLICY-supported documents, such as research reports, workplans, briefing booklets, and training manuals (see References).

Program Focus

POLICY country programs support the project’s overall strategic framework and are built around key program elements, namely Policy Dialogue, Planning and Finance, Participation, and Research. The degree to which these elements feature varies across country programs. It was hypothesized that countries with a strong Participation focus would be more likely to address gender issues, since women’s participation in the policy process is widely acknowledged as a gender problem.⁹ However, although Participation is a program focus in all of the country programs with four or more gender-related activities, it is also a focus in four of the six country programs that report little attention to gender or no gender activities at all. This suggests that, although attention to gender usually does imply a focus

⁹ The Participation element focuses on building FP/RH networks and strengthening the advocacy capabilities of these networks, local NGOs, and other civil society actors; and broadening the participation of stakeholders at all policy levels.

on Participation to improve the policy environment for RH, the reverse does not necessarily hold.

Similarly, we did not observe strong associations between the number of gender activities and country program objectives, as measured by the IRs to which they link. A higher percentage of countries in which four or more gender-related activities were undertaken than all POLICY countries as a whole included IR2, *Strengthened collaboration among governments and NGOs*. Conversely, country programs in general are more likely than those with four or more gender-related activities to include IR3 and IR4 (Planning and Finance). Interestingly, country programs that include four or more gender-related activities are supporting on average the same number of IRs as country programs overall, suggesting that doing more on gender is not simply a reflection of a more comprehensive program in general. These comparisons are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6
Comparisons between Country Programs with Regard to the IRs They Support

| Intermediate Result | With four or more gender related activities (n=7) | All country programs (n=33) |
|---|--|--|
| IR1: Effective advocacy for FP/RH | 6 (86%) | 24 (73%) |
| IR2: Strengthened collaboration among governmental and NGO sectors | 3 (43%) | 11 (33%) |
| IR3: More effective planning for FP/RH IR4: Improved Financing for FP/RH | 3 (43%) | 17 (52%) |
| IR5: Information used for policy and program development | 6 (86%) | 31 (94%) |
| Average number of IRs supported | 2.6 (range: 2-4) | 2.6 (range: 1-4) |

Change Over Time

About one-half of the country programs reported a change over time in the level and nature of their gender activities. In all cases, country programs paid more attention to gender over time. Attention to gender increased in many countries, but particularly in Bolivia, Guatemala, Jordan, Kenya, and Peru, countries with four or more gender-related activities. As the Bolivia country manager reported, “The program went from having nothing on gender, to developing gender-specific activities (advocacy training for women, gender research, gender guidelines), and finally to including gender as an overarching, crosscutting issue.” The Guatemala country manager reported that “the gender focus keeps getting stronger in response to the dynamic with our counterparts, the maturation of the project, opportunities that keep arising, and a new USAID project officer who is pushing the issue

strongly (she is also now the gender officer on the mission).” The Jordan country manager reported that gender evolved and that the change was counterpart driven: “Basically it was the failure of [another donor] to deliver what the counterparts wanted in terms of gender, so they asked POLICY to help.” In Peru, gender has become more explicit for both POLICY and its main partner, National Network for Promotion of Women (RNPM), as the result of adding a gender expert to the POLICY team. In Kenya, the country manager reported, “We assumed at the beginning of the program that any development professional working in RH would be gender sensitive. But the [gender] assessment [we conducted] made our assumptions explicit. We learned that implicit assumptions don’t always hold.” The country manager for Morocco, where gender activities have been modest, reported “As our work devolves and gets closer to the front lines, gender becomes more important. At a national level [the lack of data on RH issues for] unmarried women is an abstract issue, but at a regional level this issue [becomes more relevant]. Gender issues will increase in importance for POLICY in the next 12 months.”

Motivation and Capacity

The impetus, or motivation, to address gender came from several sources including POLICY country team members, USAID Mission staff, and counterparts. Among the programs with four or more gender-related activities, all three sources in Bolivia, Jordan and Peru prompted attention to gender. In Turkey and India, the impetus came from POLICY staff and country counterparts. As the program manager reported for India (the only country program identified as having four or more gender-related activities throughout the life of the project), “[There are] two reasons for dealing with gender: (1) Indian leaders are aware of and officially support gender. The regionalization of politics has increased the influence of women; in some states, women have risen in the ranks and changed politics. With the decline of the Congress Party, smaller parties that are dealing with women’s issues have increased their influence. (2) POLICY staff interest in addressing gender in the program since successfully improving RH policies must take gender into account.” In Guatemala and Kenya, POLICY staff alone were the primary motivators to address gender in project activities.

Among the other country programs, motivation was more or less evenly distributed among the three sources and their various combinations. Only in two country programs did the respondent report that POLICY wanted a stronger gender focus in its program; however, USAID and/or counterparts did not. Yet when country managers were asked to identify constraints, 11 reported the reluctance of partners. In fact, the reluctance of partners, particularly USAID Missions, was identified as the most common constraint to adopting a more gender-sensitive approach.

Having a person on the staff of the country team able to recognize opportunities to address gender in the country program generally appears to be an important factor. This does not necessarily mean that members of the country team have to have intensive gender training or experience in dealing with gender issues to undertake a gender-related activity. On the other hand, in most of the country programs with four or more gender-related activities, the country managers expressed commitment to a gender-sensitive approach and

articulated the importance of gender to the success of their programs. In Bolivia, Guatemala, Jordan, Kenya, and Peru, at least one person on the country team had prior experience or gender training. Often, but not always, this was the country manager. In Turkey and India, no one had prior experience or training in gender. Bolivia, Guatemala, Peru report that the gender backgrounds of team members positively influenced how gender was dealt with in their programs. In Kenya and India, country managers reported that the gender background of team members did not influence how the teams addressed gender.

Design and Evaluation

Six country programs (Bolivia, Guatemala, India, Jordan, Kenya, and Peru), all with four or more gender-related activities, included the concept of gender in the development of POLICY Project indicators or other components of their evaluation designs. Examples include the following:

- *Bolivia Indicators.* Number of municipal plans that address gender issues that are developed and presented for approval; number of documents on population/RH, gender and adolescent-related issues produced with field support funds; number of municipal plans with gender included.
- *Guatemala Indicators.* Number of leaders/political and civil society that speak in favor of women's integrated health care.
- *India Indicators.* State-level RH action plans identify and/or address gender (USAID/New Delhi has indicators on women's status.)
- *Jordan IRs (with corresponding indicators).* Establish research capabilities on women's issues; increase participation of women in politics and policy process.
- *Peru SO.* Improved policy environment for sexual and RH rights. The Policy Environment Score (PES), a rating of the overall policy environment, is the indicator for this objective. The PES for Peru includes a component on gender.

Many country programs reported that gender is not explicitly mentioned in their indicators because gender is crosscutting and not a primary issue in the program. Others explained that gender was not a factor in their evaluation design because gender is not a priority for the Mission or counterparts; and results frameworks and evaluation plans are intended to address only priority objectives.

Workplan Analysis

Policy country programs are guided by formal country workplans, which begin with a background section that sets the stage for POLICY activities. The workplans also describe the USAID Missions' results frameworks (including Sos, IRs and sometimes related indicators of success). The workplans link the POLICY Project country-level results frameworks to the Missions' results frameworks, again listing SOs, IRs, indicators of success, and monitoring and evaluation plans. Finally, some workplans contain other information, such as a bibliography or section on results achieved, if the workplan has been updated during the life of the project.

To better understand how gender is incorporated into POLICY country programs and to provide a context for the responses from country managers regarding gender in the country programs, we conducted an analysis of the country workplans. First, we identified the words “gender,” “women,” and “men/male” in each of 32 workplans and counted the number of times each occurred in the following sections: background, results, activities, indicators, and other (e.g., Mission results frameworks, results achieved previously, and bibliography).¹⁰

The word “gender” was used in few workplans (see Table 7). A few country workplans mentioned “gender,” “women,” and “men” a number of times, whereas others mentioned one or more of the words either once or not at all. “Women” was much more commonly included than “gender” or “men/male,” indicating that formally at least, the conception of gender in POLICY work involves improving the lives of women rather than working to redress power imbalances between women and men. Three country workplans did not contain any of the three words.

The use of the word “women” mostly referred to this group as recipients of RH care. Sometimes in some country workplans the word had gender overtones, particularly related to helping or empowering women to participate in the policy process or according women their rights. “Men” referred to men as recipients of services or to the more gender-related term of increasing male involvement.

Table 7
Occurrence of Gender-related Words in POLICY Country Workplans

| Count | Gender | Women | Men |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--------------|------------|
| 0 | 22 | 4 | 20 |
| 1 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| More than 1 | 4 | 21 | 4 |
| Total (number of workplans) | 32 | 32 | 32 |

Analysis of where the words appeared in the workplans, shown in Table 8, also shows that references to “gender,” “women,” and “men/male” were much more likely in the background and activities sections, and least likely in the indicators sections.

¹⁰ CERPOD, which was included in the Special Gender Study, does not have a workplan.

Table 8
Number of Countries in which “Gender,” “Women,” or “Men/Male” Occurred in the
Workplan (n=32 countries)

| Location | Gender | Women | Men/Male |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Background | 3 | 17 | 8 |
| Activities | 7 | 20 | 5 |
| Results | 1 | 7 | 3 |
| Indicators | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Other* | 5 | 11 | 2 |

*Other includes Missions’ results frameworks, summary of POLICY results already achieved, and bibliographies.

The workplans for four of the countries in which country managers said four or more gender-related activities occurred had numerous references to gender (Bolivia, Jordan, Kenya, and Peru). One of the workplans for such a country had one reference to gender (Guatemala), while two such countries had no references to gender (India and Turkey). All of these “gender-rich” countries had a number of references to women, including references that had gender undertones, particularly in Guatemala.

Funding

The overall funding levels for project country programs ranged from \$400,000 to \$4.5 million, with a median level of \$1 million. All seven country programs with four or more gender-related activities had over \$1 million in total obligations to their programs over the life of the project. The three countries that reported undertaking no gender-related activities all had budgets under \$1 million, thus suggesting that a minimum level of funding may be necessary to give a program sufficient flexibility in order to address gender in a more comprehensive or intensive manner. The association between funding and attention to gender, however, is not particularly strong. More than one-half of the countries with budgets over \$1 million did not address gender with four or more gender-related activities. On the other hand, most programs with budgets under \$1 million undertook at least one gender-related activity.

In Bolivia, Jordan, and Peru, funds were allocated specifically for gender-related activities. Yet, again, the data show that gender-specific funds are not a prerequisite for including gender activities in country programs; the majority of countries have included gender on some level without specific funds.

Respondents’ perceptions of the influence of funding levels on attention to gender issues were mixed. Among the 22 respondents who provided information to this question,¹¹ eight (36%) responded “yes, funding influenced attention to gender,” nine (41%) responded “no,” two responded “yes and no,” and three responded “don’t know” or “hard to say.” In

¹¹ Some respondents, typically those who undertook one or no gender activities, did not provide information for this question.

Mexico, India, Peru, and Jordan, respondents reported that less money would have meant cutting back on gender activities. The Moroccan country manager noted, “If POLICY had had the time, manpower and money, the project would have become more involved in the private sector’s services for unmarried women and in male involvement programs.” In Bangladesh, however, the country manager noted that “given [other] constraints... more money alone would [not] lead to more attention to gender. You would still really have to advocate for gender.” The country manager for Bolivia commented that once they determined that gender was necessary, it became a priority. But without core funds,¹² the program team would have had to drop certain components related to gender advocacy. The country manager for Ethiopia responded, “Whether more funds would help is an interesting question. The problems are so enormous in a country like this, it is hard to know.”

Question 5. How can we support and strengthen gender-sensitive approaches in the future?

A little more than one-half of the respondents reported that they were satisfied with how they have addressed gender in their programs. Just as many, however, reported that they could do more or would like to do more. One respondent stated, “The program is doing the best it can, but we could do more. The main constraint comes from the fact that we don’t have a clear-cut idea of how we could do more. There is no clear definition of gender, much less a clear mandate.”

Respondents noted a number of constraints to addressing gender more comprehensively or intensively in their country programs (Table 9). As mentioned earlier, the most commonly cited constraint was the reluctance of partners, both USAID and country counterparts, to address gender.

¹² Core funds refers to funds that are allocated from USAID/Washington to the central project office, as opposed to field support funds, which are funds allocated to the project from the USAID Missions for work in a particular country.

Table 9
Constraints to Addressing Gender in POLICY Country Programs

| Constraint | Number of country programs that reported the constraint |
|--|--|
| Reluctance of partners (e.g., Mission, government counterparts, other CAs) to adopt a more gender-sensitive approach | 13 |
| Lack of resources (qualified human resources, time, money) | 5 |
| Lack of information/awareness of gender issues (among counterparts) | 3 |
| Low status/value of women | 2 |
| Women's health advocates are not part of the policy and planning processes | 2 |
| Lack of consensus among women's NGOs | 2 |
| Frequent changes in mission strategy and workplan | 2 |
| Inability to engage relevant stakeholder groups | 1 |
| Women lack necessary technical skills to participate in POLICY activities | 1 |
| No constraints | 3 |

Note: More than one response per country program is possible

Respondents were asked what they considered to be appropriate gender-related interventions within POLICY country programs. Their responses, summarized in Table 10, largely parallel the gender approaches they have undertaken to date in their country programs.

Table 10
Gender-related Interventions Deemed Appropriate for POLICY Country Programs

| Intervention | Number of respondents who cited the intervention |
|--|---|
| Integrate/address gender issues in specific activities, policies, plans, and/or programs | 13 |
| Get women involved in policy/support women's NGOs | 11 |
| IEC/advocacy on gender/women's issues | 7 |
| Discuss gender more explicitly | 7 |
| Conduct a gender assessment | 6 |
| POLICY should play a leadership/coordination role on gender issues | 5 |
| Respond to counterpart/local partners' requests and suggestions on these issues | 4 |
| Develop/use gender sensitive indicators/results frameworks | 4 |
| No answer, don't know or nothing beyond current role or mandate | 5 |

Note: More than one response per respondent is possible

Respondents also were asked for specific recommendations on how attention to gender could be strengthened in POLICY country programs in the future. Responses that were voiced by at least two respondents are listed below in the order of highest to lowest frequency of response:

- *Make gender explicit in projects, results frameworks, indicators, country assessments*
 - “If we did it again, we would have made gender an explicit part of the program from the start rather than let it emerge from the partners.”
 - “We need to modify our results frameworks and indicators to be more gender-sensitive.”
- *Be sensitive to gender within the local context*
 - “We go into this process of incorporating gender with one idea, but how it is actually done, and the degree to which we do it, is very much a response to the particular environment....At the local level, there is so much variation in the environment and needs of the population that the approach we take to gender has to be tailored to the situation.”
 - “If I were starting a new program, I would like to see gender brought into policies through a more participatory approach. I would work with local grassroots and religious leaders on gender and RH issues, and how these affect their lives.”

- *Include women and men in our work; diversify support by bringing in either men or women (whichever group is missing)*
 - “It is important to ensure that sex ratios at conferences and workshops are representative, and that both men and women benefit from our technical assistance. This is a place to begin, not to stop.”
 - “We need to work with men also to work effectively in gender, not just women. We need to prioritize work with women but be careful so that men recognize the rights of women also.”
- *Allocate resources (financial, human) to gender; provide technical assistance and training in gender*
 - “We need both human and methodological resources to help in this work.”
 - “Supplementary funds should be made available. For example, if I only have four weeks to develop a [computer policy] model, I can’t do advocacy with women’s groups, too, without some additional resources.”
- *Integrate gender into the broader RH issues; take a crosscutting approach to gender*
 - “Gender issues can best be dealt with as they come up within policy issues in general, and as gender inequalities are related to program issues. If a situation analysis identifies gender issues, these should be addressed within the context of the project. People either don’t respond or aren’t prepared to respond to gender head-on, but once it is part of a bigger discussion, they will deal with it. Gender is almost always a part of the problem in RH services and policies, but, like sex, people are uncomfortable talking about it.”
 - “Gender should become part of the bigger RH issue, part of IEC, part of all the work we do from the start.”
- *Advocate to USAID Missions and partners about importance of gender in RH*
 - “Everyone individually should keep questioning their own assumptions and definitions of gender, and also keep it on the radar screen by talking with counterparts and the Mission.”
 - “USAID/Washington should lobby to Missions if they want gender to be better incorporated in population and health projects.”
- *Use local experts/consultants on gender issues*
 - “Outsiders can see certain, but not all gender issues. Some issues can only be identified by a cultural insider, which is why it is important to use local advisors, researchers, and consultants.”

IV. Discussion

Overview

Results of the study demonstrate the importance of gender issues and approaches to the FP/RH policy environment and to project responses in particular. POLICY Project country managers clearly recognize the importance of gender to the success of their programs. For many, awareness of and attention to gender issues grew during the life of the project. Several noted that its importance would continue to increase.

A few POLICY country programs have explicitly incorporated gender, while others have addressed gender implicitly. Countries have addressed an array of gender issues. The various issues and approaches taken are based on the country context; POLICY, Mission, and counterpart objectives; and project resources. Although the approaches and their intensity and comprehensiveness varied from one country program to another, all gender-related activities fully supported the larger POLICY Project results framework (which does not explicitly state a gender result or indicators).

Gender-related activities are having positive outcomes in most country programs. However, many of these outcomes would have gone unreported if the Gender Special Study had not been conducted. Since most country programs did not have explicit gender-related objectives, outcomes of gender activities were not necessarily tracked as part of an overall country program monitoring and evaluation process. In fact, if POLICY's work in gender were only measured through country workplans, the conclusion would be that, with the exception of a few countries, the project was doing little to address gender issues. The challenge for country managers is to incorporate the project's wide array of gender-related activities into the formal project design and reporting process.

The data suggest that addressing gender through a variety of activities and approaches works better than simply having one or two gender activities in a global project such as POLICY. As important, however, is the enabling environment that allows a project to successfully address gender issues in program activities. These components of an enabling environment for addressing gender include

- An explicit approach to gender (e.g., specifying gender issues in the workplan, including gender-related objectives in the results framework, and identifying gender-specific evaluation criteria);
- Consensus on the importance of gender among project staff, the Mission, and counterparts; and,
- Sufficient technical and financial resources to incorporate gender.

Finally, this formative study was beneficial. Interviews provided an opportunity for project staff to reflect on the gender aspects of their programs and share their successes, concerns, and ideas. Several respondents began the interview by saying that they weren't really addressing gender, but through the course of the interview came to realize that they

were responding to gender issues. In at least one case, the interview prompted a country manager to pursue an opportunity to explicitly address gender in upcoming activities.

Recommendations

Based on these findings and recommendations voiced by the respondents, the following actions are recommended for future FP/RH policy projects:

- ***Cultivate a positive enabling environment for addressing gender.*** Discuss its importance with partners (counterparts, USAID Missions, other partners).
- ***Make gender an explicit priority.*** Identify the issues in the design of a country program, define objectives and plan interventions to respond to the gender issues, and develop gender-sensitive indicators; earmark sufficient technical and financial resources for incorporating gender.
- ***Take a participatory approach to designing and incorporating gender.*** In particular, include experts on local culture and society.
- ***Encourage and support a diversity of approaches.*** While a single gender-focused activity can produce a positive outcome, a more comprehensive approach that integrates gender across all country program activities promotes synergies among the activities.
- ***Provide technical training in gender to project staff.*** Provide opportunities for ongoing information sharing and dialogue.
- ***Develop and refine methods for documenting and measuring the impact of gender-sensitive approaches.***

During POLICY II (2000–2005), we will incorporate these recommendations into our project and country work. The need to address gender is clear and its place will be strengthened under the POLICY II Project.

In addition, the POLICY GWG plans to explore and document in greater depth how gender has been integrated in selected country programs. Comprehensive case studies will be written on gender components of POLICY programs in Guatemala and India. Additional studies will document the programs in Bolivia, Jordan, Nepal, and Peru, and will examine gender issues and approaches in HIV/AIDS policy processes in Africa.

Appendix A

Interview Protocol and Interview Guide

Interview Protocol Summary

- Provide copy of the interview questions to the respondent several days prior to the interview.
- Explain study objectives
- Refer to results of the IGWG study, “Emerging Voices on Gender,” to prompt or clarify definitions of gender, what constitutes a gender activity, different perspectives on gender.
- Take hand-written notes during the interview.
- Order of questions can be changed to maintain flow of conversation or train of thought.
- Skip questions that are not relevant to a particular country situation.

Interview Guide

1. What POLICY objectives/elements are you working on in your country? What types of policy issues have you focused on?
2. How do you personally define gender issues, or what do you think of when you hear the word “gender”?
3. Are there gender issues related to your country program? What are they?
4. What is your country program doing, or what has it done, to address these key gender issues? What was the impetus to deal with these issues (e.g., POLICY staff interest, counterparts, USAID Mission)?
5. What effect has your effort to address gender made on the achievement of country results? What effect has your program had on changing gender norms? What are some examples of successes? What are some examples of constraints?
6. Is/was gender explicitly addressed in your country program, or was it a crosscutting issue, or a key focus area? Has this changed over the course of POLICY’s work in your country? If so, how and why (e.g., influence or request from Mission or counterpart, addition of staff/team member with gender experience/interest, etc.)? Is gender mentioned in your country’s results framework or the Mission’s results framework?
7. Did your country team consider gender in the development of POLICY country indicators—or, more broadly, in the evaluation design? If yes, how, and what was the result? Or why not?

8. Do you have, or have you ever had, funds specifically allocated for gender in your country program? Do you think your overall funding levels have made a difference in how gender was addressed in your program?
9. Are you satisfied with the way that your country team is addressing/has addressed gender issues in the program?
10. What is your vision for better addressing gender issues in/through your country program? What do you think POLICY should be doing on gender issues in your country (i.e., what is an appropriate role for POLICY)?
11. Before joining POLICY, did you do any work on gender issues in RH or in another field? Have you ever had any gender training? Did anyone else on your country team (staff or consultants) have any experience working on gender issues or attend a gender training workshop? Do you think this influenced how gender was/is dealt with in your country program?
12. From your own experience on POLICY, what advice can you give to other CAs, counterparts and USAID personnel working in FP/RH policy on how to better incorporate gender in this area? What can we (POLICY or IGWG) do better in the last year of the project and beyond?

Appendix B

Indicators for Reproductive Health and Gender Differences¹³

Table B -1
Reproductive Health Indicators

| | Total Fertility Rate | Women at risk of unintended pregnancy | Contraceptive Prevalence Rate | Births attended by skilled health staff |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| | births per woman | % of married women aged 15-49 | % of women aged 15-49 | % of total |
| Countries | 1998 | 1990-1998* | 1990-1998* | 1996-1998* |
| Bangladesh | 3.1 | 16 | 49 | 8 |
| Benin | 5.7 | 21 | 16 | 60 |
| Bolivia | 4.1 | 24 | 49 | 46 |
| Egypt | 3.2 | 16 | 48 | 46 |
| Ethiopia | 6.4 | .. | 4 | 8 |
| Ghana | 4.8 | 33 | 20 | 44 |
| Guatemala | 4.4 | 24 | 32 | 29 |
| Haiti | 4.3 | 48 | 18 | 21 |
| India | 3.2 | 20 | 41 | 35 |
| Indonesia | 2.7 | 11 | 57 | 36 |
| Jamaica | 2.6 | .. | 65 | 92 |
| Jordan | 4.1 | 22 | 50 | 97 |
| Kazakhstan | 2.0 | 11 | 59 | .. |
| Kenya | 4.6 | 36 | 39 | 45 |
| Malawi | 6.4 | 36 | 22 | 55 |
| Mexico | 2.8 | .. | 65 | 68 |
| Morocco | 3.0 | 16 | 59 | 31 |
| Mozambique | 5.2 | 7 | 6 | 44 |
| Nepal | 4.4 | 28 | 29 | 9 |
| Peru | 3.1 | 12 | 64 | 56 |
| Philippines | 3.6 | 26 | 47 | 53 |
| Romania | 1.3 | .. | 57 | 99 |
| Russian Federation | 1.2 | .. | 34 | 99 |
| Senegal | 5.5 | 33 | 13 | 47 |
| South Africa | 2.8 | .. | 69 | 82 |
| Tanzania | 5.4 | 24 | 18 | 38 |
| Turkey | 2.4 | 11 | .. | 76 |
| Ukraine | 1.3 | .. | .. | .. |
| Zambia | 5.5 | 27 | 26 | 47 |
| Zimbabwe | 3.7 | 15 | 48 | 69 |

* Data are for most recent year available.

¹³ World Bank, 2000; data on RH came from Demographic and Health Surveys, WHO, and national statistics offices, and were compiled by the World Bank. Calculations of gender ratios in Table B–2 were carried out by World Bank staff.

Table B-2
Gender Differences

| Countries | Female advantage | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Female population | Labor force participation | Adult literacy rate | Net primary enrollment ratio | Life expectancy at birth | Child mortality rate |
| | % of total | Ratio of female to male | female - male difference | female - male difference | female – male difference | female – male difference |
| | 1998 | 1998 | 1998 | 1997 | 1998 | 1988-1998* |
| Bangladesh | 49.4 | 0.7 | 23 | -11 | 0 | 10 |
| Benin | 50.7 | 0.9 | 31 | -34 | 4 | 1 |
| Bolivia | 50.3 | 0.6 | 14 | -5 | 3 | 0 |
| Egypt | 49.1 | 0.4 | 24 | -9 | 3 | 6 |
| Ethiopia | 49.8 | 0.7 | 12 | -17 | 2 | .. |
| Ghana | 50.3 | 1.0 | 19 | .. | 3 | -1 |
| Guatemala | 49.6 | 0.4 | 15 | -7 | 6 | 2 |
| Haiti | 50.8 | 0.8 | 5 | .. | 5 | -1 |
| India | 48.4 | 0.5 | 24 | -12 | 2 | 13 |
| Indonesia | 50.1 | 0.7 | 11 | -1 | 4 | 1 |
| Jamaica | 50.4 | 0.9 | -8 | 0 | 4 | .. |
| Jordan | 48.2 | 0.3 | 12 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Kazakhstan | 51.5 | 0.9 | .. | .. | 11 | -5 |
| Kenya | 49.9 | 0.9 | 14 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Malawi | 50.6 | 1.0 | 29 | 2 | 0 | -12 |
| Mexico | 50.5 | 0.5 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 2 |
| Morocco | 50.0 | 0.5 | 26 | -19 | 4 | -2 |
| Mozambique | 51.5 | 0.9 | 31 | -11 | 3 | -2 |
| Nepal | 49.4 | 0.7 | 35 | -31 | 0 | .. |
| Peru | 50.3 | 0.4 | 10 | -1 | 5 | 1 |
| Philippines | 49.6 | 0.6 | 1 | 0 | 4 | -2 |
| Romania | 50.9 | 0.8 | 2 | 0 | 8 | -2 |
| Russian Federation | 53.3 | 1.0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | -1 |
| Senegal | 50.1 | 0.7 | 20 | -12 | 4 | -2 |
| South Africa | 51.9 | 0.6 | 2 | 0 | 5 | .. |
| Tanzania | 50.5 | 1.0 | 19 | 1 | 2 | -7 |
| Turkey | 49.5 | 0.6 | 18 | -2 | 5 | 2 |
| Ukraine | 53.5 | 0.9 | 0 | .. | 11 | .. |
| Zambia | 50.4 | 0.8 | 15 | -1 | 0 | -3 |
| Zimbabwe | 50.4 | 0.8 | 9 | -2 | 3 | 0 |

• Data are for most recent year available.

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